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Fourth Annual Banquet of The Bibliophile Society

1908

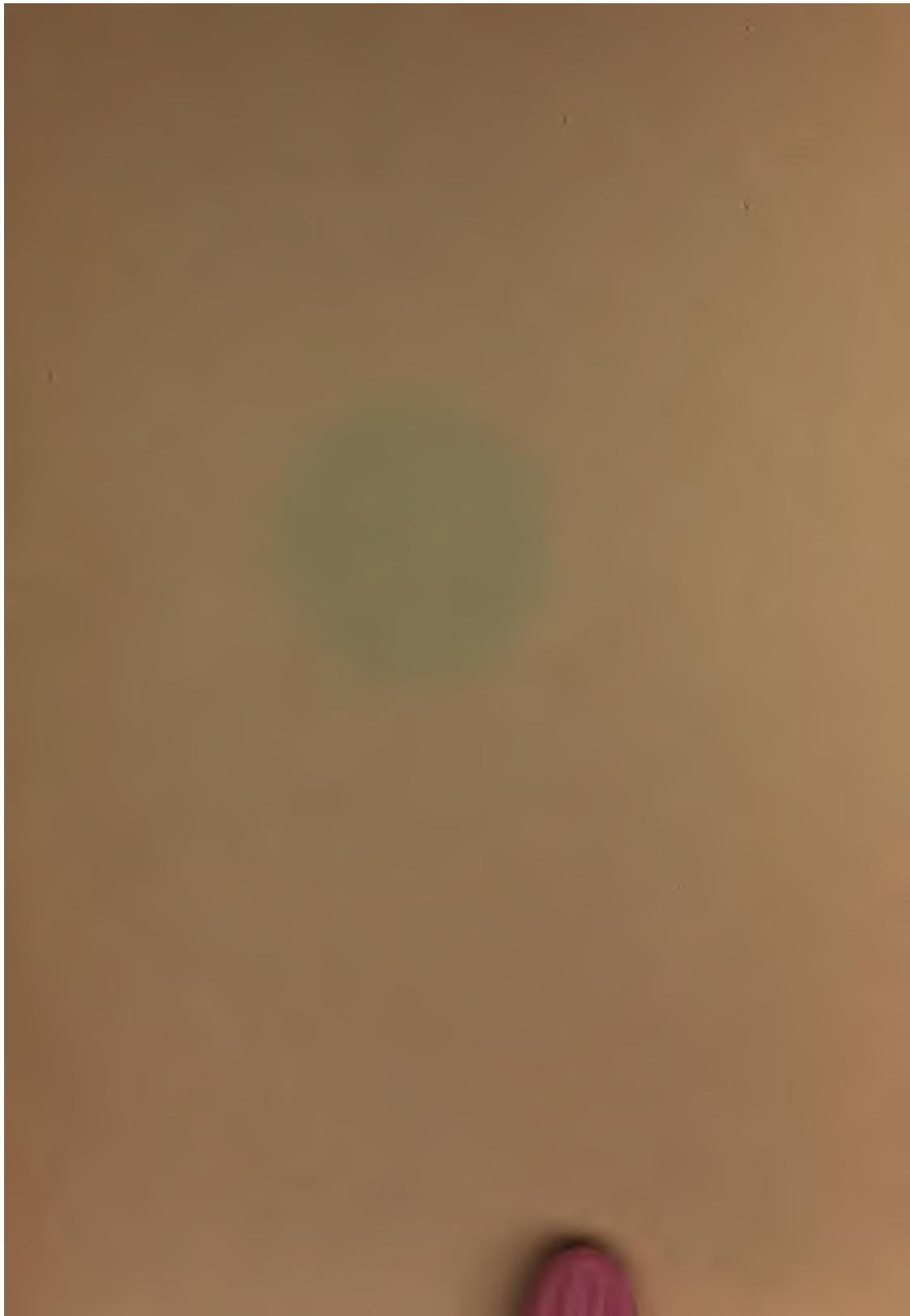


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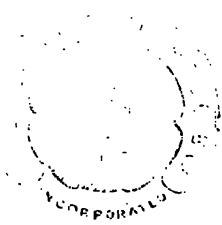
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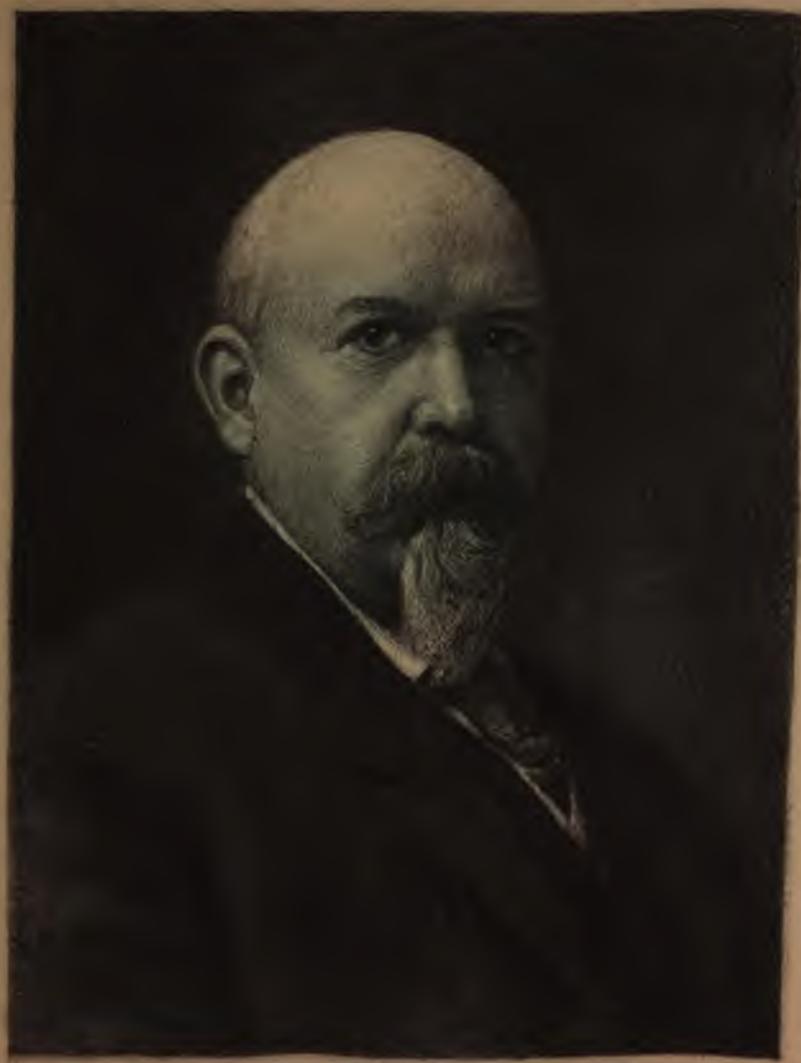






1880-1881





W. K. Rixby  
1906



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**FOURTH**  
**ANNUAL BANQUET**

. . . OF . .

**THE BIBLIOPHILE SOCIETY**

When will it be allowed me, now with the  
books of the ancients, now in sleep and hours of  
indolence, to drink a sweet forgetfulness of an  
anxious life?

**HORACE, S. 2, vi, 60.**

**NEW ALGONQUIN CLUB**

**BOSTON**

**JANUARY 11, 1906**

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# Menu

**BATONS DE CAVIAR**

**OYSTERS**

**POTAGE à LA SONTAG**

**AGUILLETTES OF HALIBUT ADMIRAL  
CUCUMBERS**

**PIGRAMMES DE FOIE GRAS PRIMIÈRE**

**SADDLE OF LAMB TARDIFF  
POTATOES à LA DAUPHINE  
HARICOTS VERTS**

**FRESH MUSHROOMS EN CASSEROLE**

**SORBET**

**RED HEAD DUCK**

**SALAD à LA ROYAL**

**CHEESE CROQUETTES**

**FANCY PUDDING ICES**

**PETIT FOURLS**

**COFFEE**

TESTIMONIAL COMMITTEE

WILLIAM REID, CHAIRMAN

GEORGE C. PERKINS

J. LEWIS JONES

JOHN D. WOODBURY

HENRY H. DAWER

January 2, 1906.

To William K. Bixby, Esquire:

Your fellow members of The Bibliophile Society wish to leave with you some permanent expression of the regard in which they hold you, and of the obligation they feel for the services you have rendered them.

They admire the taste, learning and liberality which have led you to acquire so many treasures in books and manuscripts, and they feel honored in having you as an associate.

They appreciate the unselfish generosity with which you have placed these priceless collections at the service of your book-loving friends in this organization, and for that reason they count themselves your grateful debtors.



You would never permit an attempt to discharge such an indebtedness. But they cannot be denied the privilege of recognizing it, in the piece of silver and gold plate which they now ask you to accept from them. They have endeavored to make this an object of art, not wholly unworthy of the home they wish you to give it, and we are instructed to bring it to you with the gratitude and sincere good wishes of your four hundred and ninety-nine associates in The Bibliophile Society.

Whitelaw Reid  
George C. Perkins  
J. Levering Jones  
John P. Woodbury  
Henry H. Harper

Committee

anno 1832





## Description

The Punch Bowl is of sterling silver and gold, resting on a plateau, or standard, of sterling silver. The piece weighs nearly nine hundred ounces; the height is twenty-two inches, and the extreme width thirty-one inches. It is designed in the Roman Corinthian type, and in its decorative features follows closely the detail of the Temple of Antoninus and Faustina at Rome, generally held to be one of the most refined examples of that type.

Twelve columns support the upper portion of the Bowl. Directly below these on the obverse of the body is the Seal of The Bibliophile Society, with an open book and an unrolled parchment on either side of the Seal.



Nodie work or stamped work has been used in the construction of this piece. All is moulded and hand chased and finished, and the ornamentations are in hand wrought gold. The inside is heavily plated with gold, and the broad flat rim surface at the top gives the piece a substantial massive appearance.

The following inscription appears in raised Roman letters on the side of the bowl:

"Presented by the Members of The Bibliophile Society to William K. Bixby, St. Louis, Missouri, on the forty-ninth anniversary of his birth."



REMARKS  
OF  
ALBERT BUSHNELL HART, LL.D.,  
AT THE FOURTH ANNUAL BANQUET OF THE  
BIBLIOPHILE SOCIETY<sup>1</sup>

To understand the purposes of this gathering one needs to be not only a gastronome but also an adept in what Mrs. Malaprop called a "nice derangement of epitaphs." What is a bibliophile? A *bibliotaph* is "a person whose pursuit it is to keep books under lock and key." *Bibliotaph*, therefore, seems to be in many cases synonymous with librarian; but the true bibliophile shuts not up his treasures; he brings them out for the delectation of his friends. Old Byrom says:

If to adore an image is idolatry,  
To deify a book is bibliolatry;

and your true bibliophile, if he does not deify his possessions, at least carefully insures them.

<sup>1</sup> During the course of Professor Hart's remarks he read Mr. Whitelaw Reid's presentation address.

That persons so rare, so thoughtful of the future, so contented with their monopoly as the bibliophiles, should associate, is the law of this modern world of combination; and if Milton can be trusted, it was also the law of an earlier period of our existence; for he says:

There entertain them as the saints above  
In solemn troops and sweet societies.

Such heavenly organizations, however, are not registered in the office of our Secretary of State, and mundane gatherings like this must depend upon the preparations made by human beings; for Lord Bacon says: "Certainly the great multiplication of Virtues upon Human Nature resteth upon Societies well Ordained and Disciplined." This is evidently a slant at the Treasurer of The Bibliophile Society, with whose discipline we are all familiar; and his ordinances include not only this array of guests, but a mysterious form which stands there underneath its modest veil. The sterling qualities of the pure gold and silver in this mysterious piece are typical of the character of our guest of honor and fellow member.

An old college professor, whose students sought to pose him by asking him to define a

phenomenon, replied : " Well, a cow is not a phenomenon,— an apple tree is not a phenomenon; but when you see that cow climbing that apple tree, tail foremost, to pick the apples, that is a phenomenon ! " Now, a collector is not a phenomenon, nor a society of collectors: we all collect our own treasures—and perhaps would collect our neighbors' also but for certain legal formalities—nor is the possessor of the rarest books and manuscripts a phenomenon. Have not Lenox, Carter Brown, Burton and Hubert Bancroft made such collections? Nevertheless, an apple tree that not only grows golden fruit, but periodically shakes it down into the mouth of the expectant cow is, I will submit, a phenomenal phenomenon. That a collector should prize beautiful rarities, and should pursue them the whole globe round, is natural enough; but that the same collector should place his unique possessions at the disposal of this Society (of which he is a member), and thus permit the rarest blossoms of his garden to bloom for every one of our members (no extra blossoms for the general public) is, you will agree, a phenomenon as rare as the André Journal; as simple and unaffected as the Charles Lamb letters.

(3)



In his pursuit of manuscript our guest reminds me of the Italian scholar, Poggio — that mighty collector and investigator, of whom a contemporary says: “No severity of winter cold, no snow, no length of journey, no roughness of roads, prevented him from bringing the monuments of literature to light. If he could not get access to a manuscript otherwise, he did not scruple to steal it, or to hire some one to steal it.” On one occasion Poggio came across the forgotten collection of the rarest manuscripts in the Monastery of St. Gall, among them a copy of the Roman rhetorician, Quintilian. “I verily believe,” he wrote, humorously personifying the manuscript, “that if we had not come to the rescue, he must speedily have perished. He was indeed right sad to look upon and ragged, like a condemned criminal, with rough head and matted hair, protesting by his countenance and garb against the injustice of his sentence.” This manuscript, found, as Poggio says, “lying in a most foul and obscene dungeon at the very bottom of a tower,” he transcribed with his own hand in thirty-two days, and transmitted his copy to a friend in Italy. His friend replied to Poggio: “What a glory it is for you to have brought

to light the writings of the most distinguished authors. Posterity will not forget that MSS. which were bewailed as lost beyond the possibility of restoration have been recovered,— thanks to you."

Such a collector is Mr. Bixby. Such indefatigability has he generously placed at the service of this Society. He has discovered the secret of human action, millenniums ago pointed out by Confucius: "The master said: 'Do you mean the energy of the North, or the energy of the South, or the energy which you should cultivate yourself?'" His is the energy which cultivates itself.

I am not put up here, however, to bring sweets, crack historical nuts, and discuss the "raisins of things;" I am no dessert; but an announcement, prefixed to the dinner which you will still have the opportunity of eating, if I am merciful! I am here to say to our guest, with Dan Chaucer:

Look what is there ; put in thine hand and grope ;  
Ther shalt thou finden silver as I hope.

[*At this juncture the bowl was unveiled.*] Thus have I "let the cat out of the bag;" or to speak more accurately, let the gratitude

and good will of The Bibliophile Society escape out of a full heart. The article which has just been revealed by the magic touch of the head waiter is not a temple, though it be of the Corinthian order; nor is it, as might be wildly guessed, a swimming tank; nor yet a font; it is simply a punch bowl. Now, punch, in the German, as every Christmas visitor knows, is *boulé*. *Boulé*, in Greek, means a council; and, according to the Hebrew, "in a multitude of counsellors there is wisdom." Hence, it is evident, without further parley, that a multitude of Mr. Bixby's friends, namely the four hundred and ninety-nine members of The Bibliophile Society, have had the wisdom, without taking him into their councils, to present to him this punch bowl, which has at least the inestimable merit, in the eyes of the true collector, of being the only copy known to exist. Will Mr. Bixby, therefore, join the four hundred and ninety-nine members in a little circle round this punch bowl, to quaff a simultaneous toast:

And least that anie one should kepe with him  
the cuppe  
Till he had druncke but halfe, and so might  
rise thereby

Among them some debate and strife, they  
drincke all uppe

And thus they plie the potte, and quaffing  
Quietlie.

With this gift, Mr. Bixby, goes the sincere good will and friendship of your associates in The Bibliophile Society, who desire that you should have some permanent testimony to the truth that the Society is sincerely grateful for your generous interest; that it thanks you for the important and fascinating works which you have put at the disposal of its officers for publication; and that it feels a preliminary gratitude for like favors yet to come. We are sincerely and heartily glad to welcome you as a fellow member in this place. And, in the name of the Society, I hereby transfer to you all right, title, and interest in this piece of silver and gold construction, with the parting injunction :

And let your silver chime  
Beat in melodious time.



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